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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT Tuesday, December 4, 1934.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Questions and Answers." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

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Outdoor clothes for youngsters seem to be the first problem on the schedule this morning. Here's a letter from a friend who wants advice on material for playsuits. She's going to make a playsuit as a Christmas present for her small son, aged four. It's going to be bright red because he enjoys that color so much and because it's becoming to him. But what material shall she use to keep out the snow and the north wind?

Well, there's a question that goes straight to the clothing specialists for reply. They say that the warmth of a fabric depends on weave and finish more than on weight. So they think the most desirable fabrics for children's winter wear are warm, light in weight, soft, pliable, moisture-proof and closely woven or knitted. I guess I better repeat that list of qualifications -- warm yet light in weight, soft and pliable but also moisture-proof and closely woven or knitted. Well, few fabrics measure up to all these requirements, but many answer the purpose very well. You'll find that a soft, closely woven, fuzzy cloth will be warmer than a harsh, smooth leathery fabric -- and also, of course, much more comfortable. Loosely knitted materials and sweater suits are elastic yet fit snugly, but they're less warm than woven ones because the stitches are far apart and the wind can blow through. When children play out of doors they need a suit that keeps them dry as well as warm. For this purpose choose a cloth that is woven so tightly that it sheds moisture, or one that is treated (not rubberized) on the surface with some finish that will turn off water and slushy snow.

Perhaps you've seen the exhibit of children's clothes from the Bureau of Home Economics. If you have, you'll remember the comfortable convenient little one-piece play suits for both small boys and girls alike. The fabric used in making one of these is a firm cotton suede cloth, napped slightly inside as well as outside. Then another is a shower-or-windproof cotton. The special point about this fabric is that it is not rubberized, so does not cause a child to perspire.

If you want more information on children's playsuits, write the Bureau of Home Economics at Washington, D. C.

The second question on the program is about canned milk. A young housekeeper wants to know whether evaporated milk should be kept in the refrigerator like bottled fresh milk or whether it is all right out on the pantry shelf.

The answer to that is: "It all depends on whether the can has been opened."

As prepared in the factory, evaporated milk is a sterile product like other properly canned foods and keeps indefinitely as long as it is sealed. Before opening, you can keep cans of milk on the pantry shelf just as you do other foods in cans. But once opened, safety requires that you treat evaporated milk just as you treat fresh fluid milk. Leave it in its can but keep the can in the coldest part of your refrigerator and keep it no longer than you would fresh milk.

Now to answer another kind of question. This comes from a lady who is buying a nice blanket for a Christmas present and wants to know whether her best choice would be all-wool, or part-cotton-and-part-wool, or cotton.

Well, the textile experts will tell you that both cotton and wool blankets have their place. Each of the fibers has its own properties which make it valuable from different standpoints. Cotton launders easily, does not felt or shrink as much as wool, is stronger than most wools, and is less expensive. But wool has one well-known quality that makes it so popular for blankets. It can make the warmest fabric because the fiber will hold a nap. When warmth is the chief quality you want in a blanket, of course, you'll choose wool.

The blankets that you see marked "part-wool" are made of cotton and wool. Probably a very small amount of wool in a blanket made chiefly of cotton isn't valuable. Research hasn't proved just how much wool a part-wool blanket should have to give it the desirable qualities of wool, but the specialists agree generally that it ought to be at least 25 per cent wool. In other words, a fourth of the total fiber in a part-wool blanket should be wool.

Well, when you go shopping for blankets, you have to consider many other things besides this wool versus cotton matter. You also want to know how strong the blanket is, and what its weight is, and whether the bindings will wear well.

You can test the strength of a blanket just as you would test any material. Perhaps you never happened to notice that blanketing is much like any other fabric except that the filling is almost always of large loosely twisted masses of fiber which are later pulled up to make the fuzzy nap on the surface. If the manufacturer uses too little fiber and yarns that are twisted too loosely, the blanket's foundation won't be strong, especially if it has a thick nap. So when you're shopping for blankets, push the nap aside and study the foundation fabric, just as you would any other material before you buy. You want a good strong fabric. So test to see if the nap pulls off easily. Then hold it up before a light and look through the material.

As for the weight of the blanket, you can test that by comparing two blankets of equal size and the same kind of fiber. The heavier one has more fiber in it, so weight indicates relative value. But weight isn't all-important, because heavy, poorly napped blankets are not so warm as lighter, well-napped ones. As for bindings, just make sure they are of durable material, and that they are firmly stitched on.

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